

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (canceled).

Claim 2 (currently amended): ~~Longitudinal~~ The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim ~~± 8~~, wherein the ~~central articulation~~ ~~(4)~~ has an third inner hub ~~(15)~~ having a central bore ~~(16)~~ that is provided with a plug-in tooth system ~~(17)~~, which accommodates a journal ~~(9)~~ of a the first shaft segment ~~(2)~~ of the ~~longitudinal~~ ~~shaft~~ ~~(1)~~ for plug-in centering for integral rotation.

Claim 3 (currently amended): ~~Longitudinal~~ The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim ~~± 8~~, wherein the ~~two first and second~~ shaft segments ~~(2, 3)~~ of the longitudinal shaft ~~(1)~~ are configured as shaft tubes, and the ~~first, second, and third~~ outer hubs ~~(7, 11, 12)~~ of the ~~gearbox side articulation~~ ~~(5)~~, the ~~differential side~~ ~~articulation~~ ~~(6)~~, and the ~~central articulation~~ ~~(4)~~ are shaped sheet-metal parts directly connected with the shaft tubes.

Claim 4 (currently amended): Longitudinal The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim ± 8, wherein the gearbox-side articulation (5) and/or the central articulation (4) are sliding articulations.

Claim 5 (currently amended): Longitudinal The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim 4, wherein the gearbox-side articulation and the central articulation are sliding articulations and the sliding articulations (4, 5) together have an assembly displacement path~~(2 l₁ + 2 l₂)~~, which corresponds to at least a length (L), with which the gearbox output shaft or the differential input shaft (24) projects into the first or second inner hub (15, 18) of the gearbox side articulation (5) or the differential side articulation (6) in operation.

Claim 6 (currently amended): Longitudinal The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim ± 8, wherein the differential-side articulation (6) is a synchronous articulation.

Claim 7 (currently amended): Longitudinal The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim ± 8, wherein the first shaft segment is

a gearbox-side shaft segment and the second shaft segment is a differential-side shaft segment, said first shaft segment having
~~(2)~~ has a diameter $\langle D_2 \rangle$ that deviates from a diameter $\langle D_3 \rangle$ of the differential side second shaft segment ~~(3)~~, in such a manner that the two shaft segments ~~(2, 3)~~ of the longitudinal shaft ~~(1)~~ can be pushed onto one another in the manner of a telescope.

Claim 8 (new): A longitudinal shaft for use in an automobile having all-wheel drive or rear-wheel drive comprising:

- (a) a gearbox-side articulation having a first inner hub and a first outer hub at least partly surrounding the first inner hub;
- (b) a differential-side articulation having a second inner hub and a second outer hub at least partly surrounding the second inner hub;
- (c) a central articulation having a third inner hub and a third outer hub at least partly surrounding the third inner hub at least in some regions; and

(d) first and second shaft segments connected with one another so as to rotate together by way of said central articulation;

wherein each of said first and second inner hubs has a respective central bore provided with a plug-in connection to connect the longitudinal shaft for integral rotation and to center the longitudinal shaft on journals of a gearbox output shaft and a differential input shaft, respectively.

Claim 9 (new) : A longitudinal shaft for use in an automobile having all-wheel drive or rear-wheel drive comprising:

(a) a gearbox-side articulation having a first inner hub and a first outer hub at least partly surrounding the first inner hub;

(b) a differential-side articulation having a second inner hub and a second outer hub at least partly surrounding the second inner hub;

(c) a shaft segment connected with the first and second outer hub so as to rotate together;

wherein each of said first and second inner hubs has a respective central bore provided with a plug-in connection to connect the longitudinal shaft for integral rotation and to center the longitudinal shaft on journals of a gearbox output shaft and a differential input shaft, respectively.

Claim 10 (new) : The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim 9, wherein at least one sliding unit is provided in the longitudinal shaft.

Claim 11 (new) : The longitudinal shaft as recited in claim 10, wherein the at least one sliding unit comprises a sliding articulation.